

Welcome by Monterey Mayor Dan Albert to the Federal Communications  
Commission Localism Task Force

July 21, 2004

Members of the Task Force, good evening. I'm privileged to welcome you tonight and am glad that you chose to hold this important hearing in Monterey and at the City's beautiful Conference Center. This is an important policy area for us, and I know that it is generating considerable discussion across the country. Thank you for reaching out to hear the public.

I would like to share with you two messages this evening. The first is that the commercial broadcast media have a history of serving this community well. We work with, watch, and listen to our local media outlets on a regular basis. I'm a retired educator and, generally, the report card is a good one.

We also work with our local broadcasters during times of emergency when we need to disseminate vital public information during earthquakes, fires, floods, and hazardous materials incidents. Again, good marks.

Lastly, we have had many opportunities to collaborate with local broadcasters as they wear their corporate citizen hat while participating in a number of community enrichment initiatives. Frankly, this community wouldn't be the same without them.

I would caution the Task Force, however, not to be too quick to generalize my beliefs to other markets. I think that our size makes our relationship with broadcasters somewhat unique. I don't think the same thing can be said in other communities, especially the larger ones, and I know this adds a lot of meaning to your proceedings tonight.

As an example of the success we have had locally, I would like to share with you an unprecedented success story involving Clear Channel Communications and its predecessor, The Ackerley Group. Our community media nonprofit, Access Monterey Peninsula had just incorporated and was looking for a home when Ackerley began operations under a Local Marketing Agreement that moved the CBS affiliate out of Monterey to locate it with the Fox affiliate in Salinas. To make a long story short, Ackerley made the vacant facilities in Monterey available to AMP at a very favorable below-market rent.

In essence, when substantial debate was taking place about turning two commercial editorial voices into one, Ackerley enabled an amazing number of community voices by making its facilities available to the community. As a major partner of AMP, the City is proud of our relationship with Ackerley and now Clear Channel, and we look forward to that relationship continuing for a long time.

My comments to you on my second message are briefer. Simply put, although your proceedings are looking at commercial broadcast media, I heartily encourage you to look to community media and PEG

access to the cable systems as vehicles to meet community needs and interests. These solutions can, in fact, help mitigate many of the concerns you are hearing in this media consolidation debate.

As an example, AMP and the City have collaborated to use our institutional network and community media center to cablecast this hearing locally, and webcast it across the county.

PEG access and institutional networks are at risk, however, because of the growing erosion of local government's cable franchising authorities by legislators and regulators. It's a subject that we care very deeply about, and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss it with you in greater detail.

Again, thank you for visiting us in Monterey, and please let us know how we can assist you in your work in the future.